

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, due to travel restrictions I was unable to vote on H.R. 4843, the Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2006. If I were here I would have voted in favor of the legislation.

A cost of living adjustment is the least we can do for our veterans. They, and their families, sacrifice a lot to protect our freedoms and rights. Our nation has a responsibility to take care of our veterans.

Surviving spouses of veterans whose deaths were service-connected and their children will benefit from the increase. We must remember when a soldier dies it is our responsibility to take care of their family. It is our duty.

I am hopeful that this is the first of other increases for our veterans. We would all like to see more funding for healthcare and other programs but unfortunately the House leadership doesn't place the emphasis on funding as strongly as I do.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT A.
MACPHERSON

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise with pride today to honor my constituent Robert A. Macpherson, recipient of the 2006 Federal Highway Administration's Excellence in Right of Way Award in the Leadership category. This biennial national award is given to one individual who has demonstrated excellence in leadership and made outstanding innovations in the field of right of way.

The prestigious award was presented to Mr. Macpherson by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and FHWA Right of Way and Utilities. This honor recognizes Mr. Macpherson's significant contributions to his profession that have helped to streamline the process of real property acquisition, making it easier to acquire property while protecting the rights of owners and tenants.

Mr. Macpherson has been a dedicated employee of the California Department of Transportation for over 40 years. During his tenure with the department he has served the people of California in many capacities, most recently as the District 4 Deputy Director for Right of Way and Right of Way Engineering and Surveys.

In addition to his longtime service to the California Department of Transportation, Mr. Macpherson has volunteered for the Boy Scouts of America for over 25 years. He is the father of four and resides in San Rafael with his wife of 46 years.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Macpherson is a shining example of the benefits that hard working and creative individuals can contribute not only to the state of California but to the country. It is my pleasure to honor him for the receipt of the 2006 Federal Highway Administration's Excel-

lence in Right of Way Award. I have no doubt that he will continue to serve his community as an example of effective and dedicated leadership.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HIV
TESTING DAY

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise on the occasion of National HIV Testing Day.

Mr. Speaker, more than one million Americans are currently living with HIV/AIDS. Of those, an estimated 320,000 people do not even realize that they carry the virus. Another 40,000 new transmissions are occurring every year in the United States, about half of which result from individuals who are unaware they are infecting others.

Today, June 27, 2006, is National HIV Testing Day, which gives us an opportunity as a Nation to pause to acknowledge the terrible toll that HIV is taking on America and to recommit ourselves to the eradication of this terrible disease. Most importantly, perhaps, National HIV Testing Day is an occasion on which we reiterate our commitment to testing vulnerable Americans for HIV as a first step towards providing counseling, offering treatment and bringing an end to the spread of AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to note that one of the nation's leading manufacturers of HIV rapid test kits, Chembio Diagnostics, is located in Medford, New York, which happens to be in my district. For years, Chembio has been a major provider of HIV test kits across the globe, and recently they secured FDA approval to sell their test kits in the United States. For those employees in my district who engage in the important business of promoting testing for HIV, this day is of particular significance.

In his 2006 State of the Union address, President Bush proposed to direct \$93 million to the purchase and distribution of rapid HIV test kits for use in areas of the country with the highest rates of newly discovered HIV cases and the highest suspected rates of undetected cases. In response, we recently appropriated \$63 million for this program. I strongly support the President's new testing initiative and the increased importance placed upon testing as part of the continuum of care and treatment we provide for HIV/AIDS patients in this country.

For too long, testing has been an afterthought rather than a priority. I sincerely hope this is an area where we can find bipartisan agreement and move swiftly to provide more resources to prevent the spread of AIDS in the coming year and beyond. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I strongly encourage my colleagues to join me in observation of National HIV Testing Day and in recognition of Chembio's break-through achievement in this critically important, life-saving field.

ORDINARY MAN, EXTRAORDINARY
DAD

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, "Just a truck driver and daddy from Florida" is how Mark Lunsford describes himself. Being a single father, he worked many long, hard miles on the road to provide a good life for his children. He is just an average Joe. He has always loved his kids with every fiber of his being and he always made sure they were safe.

Nine-year-old Jessica, or "Jessie" as her daddy calls her, lived with Mark and his parents, where she could be closely watched and protected, even when he was on the road. She was a bright, energetic child who loved her grandparents, adored her father, and had been spared of the darkness of society. That beautiful innocence, however, was violently shattered in the dark of night on February 23, 2005.

Unbeknownst to Mark and his parents, a serial-convicted sex offender lurked right across the street. This vile snake laid in wait, slithered into the Lunsford home, and abducted little Jessica from her own bed. He took her safety, he took her innocence, and in the end, he took her life. Sadly, one month later, the devastating discovery of Jessica Lunsford occurred.

As any father would be, Mark was inconsolable at the news of his daughter's death. Mark realized, however, that he had to prevent another father from feeling this immense grief and another child from experiencing such violence. Mark immediately began working with the Florida State Legislators in enacting legislation aptly named, "Jessica's Law." "Jessica's Law" requires a minimum sentence of 25 years incarceration for first time sexual offenders of children. The law also requires that these predators must be monitored for life, if they are released from prison.

A man who never imagined that he would be involved in politics, Mark became Jessica's voice throughout State governments. His fatherly instincts drove his passion to protect our Nation's children from these dangerous sexual predators lurking among us. During the last 15 months, due to his dedication, "Jessica's Law" has been enacted in 16 States, with 9 additional States enacting legislation similar to Jessica's Law." He is soft-spoken about his achievements and accomplishments, maintaining his victories are "Only Jessie's." He has stated to me on many occasions, he will not stop until every State enacts "Jessica's Law." Her memory is his strength.

On Tuesday, June 20, 2006, Mark was awarded the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in public and community service—The Jefferson Award. Specifically, he was awarded the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Outstanding Public Service Benefiting the Local Community. This award was named after Jefferson Award co-founder, and former First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, and is considered to be one of the most prestigious of all of the Jefferson Awards.

Mr. Speaker, as a father and grandfather to 6 girls, Mark's devastating loss hits very close to home. I have the privilege of knowing Mark and consider him one of my good friends. He